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Report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016

1. The present report covers developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 30 June 2017 and is submitted pursuant to resolution 2348 (2017), in which the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to update it in writing every 45 days on political and technical progress and obstacles to the implementation of the Comprehensive and Inclusive Political Agreement signed on 31 December 2016.

I. Key political developments related to the implementation of the agreement

2. Political tensions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to rise, amid continuing challenges towards the full implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016, which should guide the country towards the holding of peaceful and credible elections and the conclusion of the political transition period. Against this backdrop, popular dissatisfaction with the political process continues to grow, aggravated by the worsening socioeconomic situation. Moreover, the security situation remains of concern in several areas in the country, in particular in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Kasai region, while security incidents have occurred in Kinshasa and in other main urban centres. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the signatories of the political agreement have yet to reach consensus on an inclusive way forward for the implementation of the agreement, particularly with respect to establishing conditions conducive to the holding of timely, credible and transparent presidential, national and provincial legislative elections.

3. In a statement on 1 July, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo reminded all signatories of the 31 December agreement of their obligation to fully and faithfully implement the agreement. He stressed that the Independent National Electoral Commission has the primary responsibility for the organization of the elections and called upon the Commission to publish, without further delay, an official and consensual electoral calendar. My Special Representative further recalled the importance of the required confidence-building measures for promoting a meaningful consensus. The President of the Commission, Corneille Nangaa, responded on 4 July, through the media, by asserting that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of

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the Congo (MONUSCO) was not mandated to organize elections, but rather to maintain peace.

4. On 7 July, in Paris, during a high-level meeting on the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo held at the initiative of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), Corneille Nangaa provided an update on the status of the electoral process, including a suggested set of minimum timelines required for the successful conduct of the process that would make it difficult to comply with the December 2017 deadline.

5. On 13 July, the Minister of Communication and the Media and government spokesperson, Lambert Mende, stated that further assessments of the electoral time frame were the joint prerogative of the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process, the Government and the Independent National Electoral Commission, in accordance with the agreement of 31 December 2016. On 20 July, the President of the Union pour la nation congolaise, Vital Kamerhe, made similar remarks, stating that the decision to postpone the holding of elections beyond December 2017 could only be taken jointly by the Commission, the Council and the Government, and urged the Commission to publish a detailed electoral calendar. The opposition Rassemblement des forces politiques et sociales de la République démocratique du Congo acquises au changement platform and its member parties made several statements denouncing the remarks made by the President of the Commission, describing it as "a declaration of war against the Congolese people" and calling for "acts of resistance" starting on 22 July. The "acts of resistance" did not, however, materialize.

6. President Joseph Kabila delegated to the Presidents of the two Chambers of Parliament his prerogative to convene the designated members of the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process to validate their credentials, discuss the consensual designation of the Council's President and establish the bureau of the oversight mechanism. On 3 July, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Aubin Minaku, presided over a preliminary meeting of proposed Council members, which was criticized by many opposition parties, including the Union pour la nation congolaise, a signatory of the special arrangement of 27 April, which had set out the process for establishing the Council. On 20 July, the President of the Senate, Léon Kengo wa Dondo, met with most of the proposed Council delegates. That meeting was followed on 22 July by a meeting co-chaired by the presidents of both chambers of Parliament, at which the President of the Forces novatrices pour l'union et la solidarité and leader of the Rassemblement dissident wing, Joseph Olenghankoy, was appointed Chair of the Council. Adolphe Lumanu, of the Presidential majority, and Vital Kamerhe were nominated as vice-presidents of the oversight mechanism, with a third post allocated to the Front pour le respect de la Constitution opposition platform led by the Mouvement de libération du Congo. Vital Kamerhe declined to accept the position of vice-president, arguing that the process to designate members of the Council was not in line with relevant provisions of the 31 December 2016 agreement. On 24 July, the Secretary-General of the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Abbott Donatien Nshole, expressed disapproval with regard to the process leading to the appointment of the Chair and members of the Council, citing the lack of sufficient consensus and inclusiveness. On 25 July, the Front pour le respect de la Constitution dissident wing spokesperson, Lumuna Ndubu, accepted the vice-president position previously rejected by Eve Bazaiba, the coordinator of the Front and Secretary-General of the Mouvement de libération du Congo. Also on 25 July, Joseph Olenghankoy chaired the first meeting of the Council, which resulted in the establishment of two commissions responsible for developing, respectively, the rules and regulations and the draft budget of the mechanism.

7. On 17 July, President Kabila appointed the former Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence and Operations of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, Lieutenant-General Dieudonné Amuli, as Commissioner General of the national police, replacing General Charles Bisengimana. Further changes were made to the leadership of security services, in particular the national police, at the national and provincial levels.

8. The Rassemblement convened a conclave on 21 and 22 July. The opposition platform reiterated calls for the implementation of the confidence-building measures foreseen in the political agreement, in particular with regard to the release of political prisoners and restrictions to democratic space, measures to promote the independence of the Independent National Electoral Commission, the publication of the electoral calendar and the holding of the elections by December 2017. The Rassemblement announced a timeline for popular mobilization, including two general strikes, on 5 and 9 August, protests in main cities on 20 August and further actions after 1 October, should the Commission fail by September to convene voters to take part in polls in December 2017. In response, the Minister of Communication and the Media and government spokesperson stated that any attempts to overthrow the Government would be considered a crime against the nation and the State and dealt with as such, in line with the Constitution.

9. On 27 June, the Deputy Secretary-General of the presidential majority, Joseph Kokonyangi, stated that a constitutional referendum could prove an alternative to failed negotiations on the holding of elections. On 11 July, the Union des démocrates socialistes, a party affiliated with the presidential majority, advocated for electoral reforms aimed at modifying the voting system. On 15 July, the youth league of the Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie, the dominant party in the presidential majority, called for a state of emergency to be declared.

10. Political actors expressed varying views regarding a post-December 2017 transition. On 11 July, the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social advocated for a six-month transition during the first half of 2018, without President Kabila in office, should elections not be organized in accordance with the political agreement. On 14 July, the President of the Liberté political party and former Minister of Industry, Germain Kambinga, advocated for an 18-month transition period, subject to a 3-month prorogation in case of force majeure, to be led by President Kabila, with a prime minister from the Union.

II. Key developments related to the implementation of the agreement

Electoral developments

11. The Independent National Electoral Commission announced that it had registered, as at 29 July, over 37 million eligible voters (90 per cent), including 48 per cent women, out of the 41 million estimated members of the electorate nationwide. The rate of women's participation in ongoing voter registration operations ranged from 43 to 48 per cent, with the exception of North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces, where the rate stood at 51 per cent, owing to special measures implemented by the Commission, in cooperation with local authorities and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Regarding the five provinces of the Kasai region, which account for 16 per cent of the estimated electorate, according to the Commission, voter registration is well under way in the Kasai Oriental and Sankuru Provinces and most parts of Lomami Province. Voter registration operations are expected to begin in August in the Kasai Central and Kasai Provinces, and the Kamiji and Luilu territories of Lomami

Province, which account for 8.5 per cent of the estimated electorate. Given the requirement for registration centres to operate for 90 days and the time required for the consolidation of the registration data, the voter registration process throughout the country will most likely not be completed before November 2017.

12. On 18 July, the Independent National Electoral Commission announced its intention to organize gubernatorial elections on 26 August in 11 provinces, namely Bas-Uélé, Equateur, Haut-Katanga, Haut-Lomami, Kasai Central, Kwilu, Mongala, South Kivu, South Ubangi, Tshopo and Tshuapa. This announcement followed a string of no-confidence motions, starting in October 2016, mainly by provincial deputies from the presidential majority against governors hailing from their own ranks on the grounds of allegations of embezzlement of funds and mismanagement. The elections have yet to be held.

Restrictions on political space and violence as they relate to the implementation of the agreement in the electoral context

13. In its semi-annual note published on 26 July, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office documented 430 violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms linked to restrictions of the democratic space in relation to the elections between January and June throughout the country. These were mainly violations of the right to liberty and security of the person, of the right to freedoms of opinion and expression (98 violations) and of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly (80 violations). The data confirms an increasing trend of violations of political rights and freedoms since 2015. This is compounded by an absence of meaningful and systematic investigations and accountability for violators of human rights. National police officers remain the main alleged perpetrators of these violations, accounting for 211 of the documented human rights violations. The Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo were allegedly responsible for 90 violations, and were followed by the political and administrative authorities (44 violations), National Intelligence Agency agents (35 violations), armed groups (28 violations), judicial authorities (16 violations) and other agents of the State (6 violations).

Confidence-building measures

14. There is an urgent need for further progress towards the implementation of the confidence-building measures enshrined in the political agreement of 31 December 2016. According to opposition parties, a significant number of political prisoners remain in detention, while the Government claims that some of the high-profile personalities in detention are charged with criminal offences unrelated to their political activities. Furthermore, a general ban on protests continues to be applied in most of the main cities. On 10 July, in Kisangani, Tshopo Province, the mayor prohibited an awareness-raising campaign on voter registration, organized by the Mouvement de libération du Congo. On 19 July, the appeal in the case against the former governor of Katanga Province, Moïse Katumbi, who had been sentenced in 2016 to three years in prison on charges of forgery of documents for the acquisition of a property by the peace tribunal of Kamalondo, commenced at the high court in Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga Province. Katumbi's lawyers noted several irregularities in the proceedings, all of which were dismissed by the court. There are concerns regarding efforts to affect the impartiality of the magistrates, especially with regard to the attempted assassination by unidentified gunmen of one of the judges the night before the court hearing. Furthermore, intimidation and harassment by state agents targeting the President of the Union nationale des fédéralistes du Congo and leader of the Rassemblement in Haut-Katanga, Gabriel Kyungu Wa Kumwanza, have increased since early July.

III. Good offices efforts for the implementation of the agreement and regional developments

15. The Government has intensified diplomatic efforts to broaden regional support. On 2 July, President Kabila travelled to Addis Ababa on the occasion of the twenty-ninth African Union summit, to seek the support of his African counterparts against the targeted sanctions that the European Union and the United States of America have imposed against some Congolese officials. At the request of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the members of the Executive Council of the African Union denounced what they considered unjust unilateral sanctions against States and citizens of African Union member States. As regards the political agreement, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union urged for the effective and consensual implementation of the 31 December agreement, with a view to the holding of elections in December 2017, and called for the urgent appointment of the chairperson and members of the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process.

16. The Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo took a strong stance in support of the full implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016 and the holding of elections in 2017, calling on the Congolese people to "take responsibility for their future", a move which was described as a call for an insurrection by the presidential majority and the Government. On 4 July, the Catholic Church launched an awareness-raising campaign on the role of peaceful protests in support of the political agreement.

17. On 7 July, in Paris, OIF, in collaboration with the International Contact Group on the Great Lakes Region, convened an extraordinary meeting to discuss the electoral stakes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Léonard She Okitundu, and the President of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Corneille Nangaa, attended the meeting.

18. On 13 July, during an extraordinary meeting held in Luanda, the Council of Ministers of the tripartite mechanism of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa unanimously denounced foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, calling for the withdrawal of targeted sanctions by non-African organizations and countries against officials of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

19. In the final report of the 19th meeting of its Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, held from 17 to 21 July, in the United Republic of Tanzania, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) asserted that instability in the Kasai region had an impact on the electoral timeline foreseen by the political agreement and denounced "extra-continental interference in the internal affairs of African Union member States", calling for the withdrawal of targeted sanctions against officials of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. SADC envisages the appointment of a special envoy for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the establishment of a temporary office to better support the electoral process and facilitate liaison with MONUSCO, with the expectation that its presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would restore confidence among the population and ensure regional support for the electoral process.

20. My Special Representative and my Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region carried out good offices efforts in support of the timely and comprehensive implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016 and worked collaboratively with national actors and regional and international partners towards a solution to the political impasse.

21. My Special Representative continued to encourage key Congolese stakeholders to remain committed to the political process, notably the implementation of the political agreement. His efforts included meetings with (a) the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior and Security, Emmanuel Shadary Ramazani, on 17 July, who encouraged my Special Representative to engage separately with the presidential majority and the Rassemblement in a small contact group format to foster consensus around the political process; (b) the Secretary-General of the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Abbott Donatien Nshole, on 17 July, who asserted that it was the responsibility of the Government and the Independent National Electoral Commission to unblock the current impasse by, respectively, the implementation of confidence-building measures and the publication of an electoral calendar; (c) the President of the Rassemblement, Félix Tshisekedi, on 23 July, who described the appointment of Joseph Olenghankoy at the helm of the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process as an additional tactic by the ruling majority to delay elections, while deploring the position of regional actors such as SADC, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region vis-à-vis the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Building on the aforementioned interactions, my Special Representative continued to encourage all stakeholders to engage in direct dialogue to find a consensual and inclusive way forward for the full and faithful implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016, the establishment of an environment for the holding of peaceful and credible elections and the holding of elections no later than December 2017.

22. Efforts undertaken by my Special Envoy included consultations with regional and international partners on ways to promote and harmonize the engagement of the international community with the Congolese parties in support of the implementation of the political agreement. In this regard, on 17 July in Addis Ababa, my Special Envoy met with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Minata Samate Cesouma, to encourage continued close partnership between the United Nations and the African Union with a view to facilitating peaceful and credible elections. The Chairperson welcomed the joint efforts of the two organizations and urged the guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region to take additional measures, including joint visits to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to sustain engagement with all stakeholders in the political process. On 2 August, my Special Envoy met the President of the Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, to discuss, among other issues, regional efforts to support the implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016.

IV. Observations

23. The political process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is marked by a widening gap between opposition platforms and the ruling majority regarding the implementation of the political agreement in a context of continued shrinking of the democratic space. Many opposition actors, including those opposition parties that have until recently adopted a more collaborative approach (namely Mouvement de libération du Congo and Union pour la nation congolaise), might become less supportive of the agreement if divergences with the ruling majority persist. The perceived breaches of the political agreement, including the appointment of the Prime Minister, the signing of the amended special arrangement and the controversial establishment of the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement

and the Electoral Process, have undermined the confidence that the stakeholders had in the political agreement early in 2017 and have led to divisions within and among opposition platforms and the ruling majority. In addition, the trust that had developed among the signatories of the agreement has waned. In this light, strong political will and broad consensus are urgently needed for the full and faithful implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016 if a new phase of political confrontation is to be avoided, especially as political tensions heighten in the context of repeated calls by many opposition platforms, the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and civil society for elections to be held by December 2017, in line with the provisions of the political agreement. Failure to create conditions conducive to the holding of timely, peaceful, transparent and credible elections enabling a peaceful transfer of power and concluding the transition period could deepen the political crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, compounding an already serious security, human rights, humanitarian and economic situation.

24. Moving the implementation of the 31 December 2016 political agreement forward requires the parties to demonstrate more political will and that they engage more constructively. The immediate, full and tangible implementation of the confidence-building measures, the consensual operationalization of the National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process and the publication of an electoral calendar in line with the provisions of the political agreement are elements that are essential to fostering the required level of confidence to overcome the deadlock in the political process. An open democratic space and full respect for political rights and freedoms for all, including the freedoms of opinion and expression and peaceful assembly, are essential to establishing the necessary conditions conducive to the holding of peaceful and credible elections. Politically motivated deprivation of liberty and other acts of intimidation against persons expressing opinions perceived as critical of the Government must stop, and those responsible for human rights violations must be held accountable. Ensuring full respect for human rights by state security forces, in particular in refraining from the excessive or disproportionate use of force in the maintenance of public order and including ensuring accountability for violations of such rights, as well as the exercise of the utmost restraint by all stakeholders across the political divide, are also essential for establishing the conditions conducive to the holding of elections. I exhort Congolese stakeholders to recommit themselves to the faithful implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016, including the implementation of confidence-building measures to pave the way for a peaceful and credible transfer of power. In the light of the above, continued political engagement with all key political actors and civil society will be crucial. It will also be important that regional and international actors approach the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with concerted actions and a common understanding of the complexity of the situation and possible solutions based on Congolese ownership. My Special Representative, working closely with my Special Envoy, will continue to pursue his good offices initiatives, in coordination with regional and international partners, with a view to helping Congolese stakeholders agree on reaching a consensual way forward for the political process.

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Letter dated 15 August 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Following the deaths of Ms. Zaida Catalán and Mr. Michael Sharp, members of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in March 2017, a United Nations Security Management System Board of Inquiry was convened to establish the facts related to the incident. The Board of Inquiry was also tasked with evaluating the United Nations response to the incident, reviewing the application and adequacy of relevant security risk management procedures, rules and regulations, and providing recommendations on actions that should be taken to avoid such incidents in the future.

By this letter I wish to transmit to you the executive summary of the report of the Board of Inquiry, which provides a synopsis of the findings and recommendations contained therein. A copy of this executive summary will also be provided to the families of Ms. Catalán and Mr. Sharp, and to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sweden and the United States of America.

While the Secretariat looks forward to the opportunity to brief the members of the Security Council on the report of the Board of Inquiry, I wish to note that the Board has indicated that further investigations and judicial processes would be required to fully ascertain the identity, affiliations and motives of the individuals involved in the killing of Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán.

In this regard, I intend to discuss with officials of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and consult with Council members regarding the establishment of a follow-on mechanism and its mandate.

In its report, the Board of Inquiry also provided recommendations on actions that the Organization could consider to strengthen the management and support arrangements of Groups of Experts reporting to the Security Council and its sanctions committees, as well the manner in which Groups of Experts should comply with the requirements of the applicable security policies and procedures established under the United Nations Security Management System. The Secretariat is currently reviewing these recommendations, some of which carry financial implications, with a view to developing a plan for their implementation, as appropriate.

I wish, once again, to pay tribute to the dedication of Ms. Catalán and Mr. Sharp to the United Nations, in the service of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to which they paid the ultimate price.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

Report of the United Nations Security Management System Board of Inquiry on the critical security incident resulting in the deaths of two members of the Group of Experts in Kananga, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Executive summary

Introduction

1. On 24 April 2017, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, in consultation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretaries-General for Political and Legal Affairs, convened the United Nations Security Management System Board of Inquiry on the critical security incident resulting in the deaths of two members of the Group of Experts in Kananga, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mr. Michael Sharp (United States of America) and Ms. Zaida Catalán (dual national of Chile and Sweden) were members of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mr. Sharp was the Coordinator of the Group and also one of the two designated armed group experts, while Ms. Catalán was the humanitarian issues expert.

2. The Group of Experts was mandated by Security Council resolution 1533 (2004). The mandate of the Group of Experts was subsequently renewed, inter alia by resolution 2293 (2016), by which the Experts were directed to provide information to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) on, among other issues, violations of human rights or international humanitarian law; support for armed groups or criminal networks involved in the illicit exploitation of natural resources; recruiting or use of children in armed conflict; designation of individuals or entities involved in non-compliance with the sanctions; and attacks on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

Board of Inquiry

3. The Board of Inquiry comprised former (retired) members of the Department of Safety and Security, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs. Mr. Gregory Starr, the former Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, was the Chair of the Board. The Board operated with full independence and impartiality.

4. The terms of reference of the Board included the review of all preliminary investigation reports, establishment of the facts related to the incident, including circumstances leading to the incident and the identification (to the extent possible) of the attackers, evaluation of all actions taken by the United Nations in response to the incident, determination of whether relevant security risk management procedures, rules and regulations were followed properly and whether they were adequate, and providing recommendations concerning any actions, steps or measures that should be taken by the United Nations Security Management System to avoid such incidents in the future.

5. The Board of Inquiry commenced its work on 8 May 2017 in New York by reviewing preliminary investigation reports, records relevant to the activities of the Group of Experts and their mandate and interviewing relevant United Nations officials at Headquarters. From 6 to 17 June 2017, the Board travelled to the

Democratic Republic of the Congo including to Kinshasa, Goma and Kananga, to conduct further interviews and review relevant information. The Board submitted its final report on 2 August 2017.

6. In the course of its inquiry, the Board interviewed and obtained witness statements from United Nations officials and non-United Nations personnel, had discussions with representatives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, met with officials from eight Permanent Missions of Member States to the United Nations, and conducted discussions with non-United Nations organizations and national investigation authorities of the Member States concerned. The Board also met with the families of the two Experts who were killed.

7. A Board of Inquiry is an analytical and managerial tool to review investigation reports, establish facts related to critical security incidents involving organizations of the United Nations Security Management System, including whether the incident occurred as a result of the acts or omissions of any individual(s). The purpose of a Board of Inquiry is to identify gaps or deficiencies in security risk management policies, procedures or operations, to strengthen security risk management controls (lessons learned) and to improve accountability for security risk management. A Board of Inquiry is neither an investigative nor a judicial review mechanism.

Facts related to the incident established by the Board

8. On 8 March 2017, Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán arrived in the city of Kananga in Kasai Central Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, via a United Nations humanitarian air service flight from Goma, North Kivu Province. Their visit followed a previous trip to Kananga in January 2017. The primary purpose of their visit, in accordance with their mandate, was to gather information on armed groups, inquire into sources of violence in the Kasai provinces, and look into reports of purported use of children in conflict.

9. On 11 March, Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán met with a small group of people presenting themselves as having connections with the Kamuina Nsapu militia. The meeting led to a decision by the two Experts to travel the next day through parts of Kasai Province to the town of Bunkonde for meetings with the Kamuina Nsapu militia leaders in that area. An audio recording of the meeting was reviewed by the Board.

10. On the morning of 12 March, the two Experts departed their hotel in Kananga en route to the town of Bunkonde (90 km south-east of Kananga) in furtherance of their investigation. They were accompanied by a locally hired Congolese citizen who served as their interpreter. They travelled on motorcycles driven by three locally hired Congolese citizens.

11. The Board was informed that the two Experts and the four Congolese persons passed through two Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo checkpoints on the way to Bunkonde, and two Kamuina Nsapu militia checkpoints thereafter. Sources reported that a militia group gathered near the Moyo River crossing close to the village of Moyo Musuila on the route to Bunkonde and fired a shotgun to stop the motorcycles, wounding one of the drivers.

12. Before arriving at their destination, the two Experts and their party were accosted by persons who appeared to be members of a local militia group. This militia group killed Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán near the village of Moyo Musuila, a location approximately 10 to 15 km from the town of Bunkonde. These facts were established on the basis of a video recording of the incident by a member of the

militia group. There are reports that the Congolese interpreter and the three motorcycle drivers were also killed, but their bodies have not been found to date.

13. On the basis of information from witnesses, 10 individuals seen in the video have been identified. There remains a lack of additional physical or forensic evidence of the involvement of individuals in the attack beyond the video. The United Nations has provided all relevant information and evidence in its possession to the national authorities. At the time of the issuance of the Board's report, the Congolese authorities had arrested two men who appeared in the video. The Congolese authorities had also arrested 10 men who did not appear in the video but who are believed to be members of the militia group involved. The Board was informed that proceedings against the suspects were being conducted in a military court because the military prosecutor has jurisdiction over crimes committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo involving the use of firearms. The Board was also informed that Kasai Central Province had been declared a military zone by the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that the military prosecutor in Kananga has taken the lead in the investigation.

Facts subsequent to the incident established by the Board

14. By nightfall on 12 March, it was confirmed that Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán had not returned from their trip, and repeated attempts to contact them were unsuccessful. United Nations Headquarters and senior mission staff members were immediately informed. On the morning of 13 March, United Nations crisis management procedures were activated, and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as the Embassies and Permanent Missions of Sweden and the United States and subsequently Chile were apprised of the situation involving the two missing Experts.[1]

15. From 13 to 28 March, MONUSCO conducted a search for the two missing Experts. The Uruguay Battalion in Tshimbulu was dispatched on the morning of 13 March with additional resources immediately mobilized in Kinshasa, Goma, Kananga and Headquarters in New York. The Uruguay Battalion conducted both air and ground patrols in the Bunkonde area starting on Tuesday, 14 March. In the course of the search efforts, additional formed units of Tanzanian Special Forces, helicopters, communications equipment, and other additional resources were flown into Kananga to bolster the search operation. The difficult terrain made it necessary for the ground patrols to search on foot, and they encountered numerous armed elements, some of them belligerent.

16. A dedicated information management unit comprising staff from the mission's Joint Operations Centre and Joint Mission Analysis Centre was established for gathering, analysing and sharing information for the search effort.

17. On 27 March, a shallow grave with two bodies, one male and the other female, appearing to be Caucasian, was discovered. The site was secured overnight by United Nations forces and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Swedish and United States Embassies in Kinshasa were informed. On 28 March, forensic officers of the police component of MONUSCO exhumed the bodies and transported them to the United Nations compound in Kananga. On 29 March, the two bodies were identified as those of Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán. On 29 March, the families of Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán were informed of the positive identification of the bodies by a senior United Nations official in the presence of a stress counsellor.

[1] The Security Council was also notified of the situation on 13 March.

18. On 1 April, following a United Nations ceremony in their honour, the remains of Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán were transferred by United Nations aircraft to Entebbe, Uganda, for autopsies and embalming procedures. On 2 April, Ms. Catalán's autopsy was conducted in Kampala. On 4 April, Mr. Sharp's autopsy was conducted in Kampala. Following the autopsies, the remains of Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán were repatriated to the United States and Sweden.

Deliberations and conclusions of the Board

19. The Board found that a group of Congolese, likely militia members from Kasai Central Province, was responsible for the deaths of Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán and was likely also responsible for the deaths of the Congolese translator and the three motorcycle drivers. It also found that there was a reasonable likelihood that the killings were committed after consultation with other local tribal actors. The Board noted that investigative support by United Nations police to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as investigative activities by the Democratic Republic of the Congo provided information that led to the identification of the individuals in the video recording. The Board held that without further investigation and the necessary judicial processes, the identity, affiliations and motives of the group that participated in the killing of Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán cannot be fully established, but the video recording leaves no doubt that Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán were murdered.

20. The Board was informed of several alternate causes of the incident. It is the judgment of the Board that information circulating regarding the possible involvement of various government individuals or organizations does not provide proof of intent or motive on the part of any individual(s). It noted that an absence of evidence however does not preclude the possibility that others are involved. Additional investigations, including those conducted by national authorities, may provide greater clarity on this issue.

21. The Board found that the two Experts were performing their official duties at the time of the incident. The purpose of their trip was to conduct first-person interviews and make first-person observations in accordance with the Committee mandates and Security Council resolution 2293 (2016).

22. Through interviews of United Nations personnel in Kinshasa, Goma and Kananga, as well as with personnel in New York, the Board found the overall United Nations response from the time it became apparent that Mr. Sharp and Ms. Catalán were missing was capable, timely, well-coordinated and caring. The Mission was highly focused on finding the two missing Experts and the four accompanying Congolese, and mobilized all available assets in this effort. Regular updates were provided to the families of the missing Experts, the other members of the Group of Experts, the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chile, Sweden and the United States of America.

23. The Board found that the United Nations had a fully functional, in-depth security programme in place that was adequately staffed and resourced to perform required security functions. Security training was readily available for United Nations personnel and for the personnel of the organizations that participate in the United Nations Security Management System. Adequate checks ensured that mandatory training was generally taken and security procedures for personal security, home security, travel security and facilities security functioned as they should.

24. The Board has identified several areas of concern, however. The Board found through interviews and observations that the members of Groups of Experts do not

believe that the United Nations Security Management System regulations pertain to them. The Board did not believe that the actions of either Mr. Sharp or Ms. Catalan contributed to the outcome.

Recommendations

25. The Board made a number of recommendations in the following areas:

(a) Advocacy for the criminal investigation to be conducted and completed by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, under its jurisdiction, and with the support of other Member States, in a transparent and conclusive manner, ensuring that the perpetrators of this crime are brought to justice;

(b) Review and strengthening of the management of the activities of Groups of Experts, including training, coordination frameworks, reporting lines, and support to their activities by field missions;

(c) Inclusion of all security aspects of the activities and personnel of Groups of Experts into the mandatory framework of the United Nations Security Management System, including the application of programme criticality and security risk management processes to enable informed decisions on acceptable security risks;

(d) Review, evaluation and adjustment of the support arrangements for Groups of Experts, in consultation with relevant legislative and budgetary bodies, to enable the safe and effective implementation of their mandates.

26. The United Nations Secretariat is now reviewing all these recommendations with a view to developing a comprehensive implementation plan, as appropriate.

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Security Council

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16 August 2017

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Letter dated 15 August 2017 from the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, I visited Bangui from 12 to 15 July 2017, where I held discussions with different stakeholders with the intention of seeking their views on the priority aspects for the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission in the Central African Republic in the light of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery. While on my visit, I was confronted with the deteriorating security situation outside of Bangui, and in particular increased interfaith violence, which needs to be addressed urgently. The report on my visit is attached for your consideration.

I would like to thank the Central African authorities, in particular Faustin-Archange Touadéra, President of the Republic, for their warm welcome. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, and his office for all their efforts, assistance and continued support, as well as the Peacebuilding Support Office for its timely and substantive advice and support.

In the meantime, I remain at the disposal of the Security Council to provide further information and clarifications as may be required. The configuration remains ready to accompany the people of the Central African Republic on their journey to peace, recovery and development and to inform the Council of developments that are relevant to peacebuilding, as appropriate.

I request that the present letter be circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Omar **Hilale**
Chair, Central African Republic configuration
Peacebuilding Commission

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Annex to the letter dated 15 August 2017 from the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

Visit of the Chair to the Central African Republic from 12 to 15 July 2017

From 12 to 15 July 2017, I undertook a visit to the Central African Republic in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. The objectives of my visit, as presented in the agreed terms of reference, were the following:

(a) To pursue, in close consultation with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations country team, engagement with the Government of the Central African Republic and national, regional and international stakeholders on the country's peacebuilding and recovery agenda;

(b) To discuss the progress made in the implementation of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery, with a focus on the pillar I of the plan, which relates to issues of resource mobilization and coherence.

Ambroisine Kpongo, the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations, joined me for this visit to her country. I wish to thank her and, through her, President Faustin Archange Touadera and his Government for receiving me and for our fruitful discussions. In the meetings with the authorities of the Central African Republic, I was accompanied by either the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, or the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Najat Rochdi. I wish to warmly thank them for their guidance and advice, as well as their teams for the excellent support for the visit. I very much look forward to continuing the cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government, MINUSCA, the United Nations country team and the regional and international partners in accompanying the people of the Central African Republic on their journey to peace, recovery and development.

In Bangui, I met with the leadership of the country, including President Touadera, Prime Minister Simplice Sarandji, Minister for Foreign Affairs Charles Armel Doubane and the Vice-President of the National Assembly, Aurélien Simplice Zingas. I met with other national stakeholders, including the civil society network for human rights, the women's platform and the youth council. I also met with the diplomatic community based in Bangui and representatives of the international organizations present there. I had multiple discussions with the Special Representative, the Deputy Special Representative and their teams who are working on different aspects of the United Nations mandate in the Central African Republic, in particular those aspects related to pillar I of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, and rule of law.

On Friday, 14 July, I travelled to Bangassou (70 minutes by air from Bangui) to witness first-hand the work of the United Nations in a region that is experiencing important security-related violence and humanitarian challenges. I am providing further details on that visit in the present report, since Bangassou reflects the potential risk that the country may relapse into violence and calls for our collective and immediate response to prevent further escalation.

Indeed, my overall impression from the visit is that the Central African Republic is vacillating between the positive move towards peace and stability that is reflected by the transparent and inclusive election of President Touadera and the successful donors' conference in 2016, and a deterioration of the security situation in some parts of the country in 2017. Renewed insecurity, limited or absent State authority in northern and eastern regions, and weak national implementation capacity were the recurrent challenges underscored by the interlocutors with whom I met.

In my discussions with different stakeholders, I insisted that the armed groups could not hold the entire political process hostage and encouraged political leaders to react and condemn publicly the attacks against MINUSCA and the civilian population.

The country is at a critical juncture. The Government leadership needs to be supported in order to drive the reforms necessary for the implementation of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery. The international community needs to sustain the commitments made in Brussels in support of the national plan, and the peacekeeping arm of MINUSCA needs to be reinforced in order to secure the country and prevent further violence. If these steps are not taken quickly, the population, which is still waiting to experience a peace dividend, will be vulnerable and at the mercy of armed groups and the negative elements of the society that are seeking to manipulate it, taking advantage of a security and development vacuum. For the Government, the United Nations, and international and regional partners, it is time to bring more coherence and urgency to their work in order to prevent further escalation of the violence and build the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

Political and security developments/situation

Through my meetings with the President, the Prime Minister, the Vice-President of the National Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and representatives of civil society organizations, I got a sense that the country is well along on its journey to democracy, reflecting the positive developments of 2016, which include the presidential and parliamentary elections. The discussions were lively and touched on key issues and challenges that the country is facing.

President Touadera reiterated the commitment of his Government to restoring peace on the entire territory of the Central African Republic and his policy of inclusion of all its people. He underscored the commitment of his Government to promoting dialogue with armed groups. In that regard, the President welcomed the accord signed in Rome on 19 June 2017 under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio, describing it as a positive step toward national reconciliation. He noted that he had been represented by two delegates and that, for the first time, the 14 armed groups had signed an accord. He reiterated his appeal to those groups, inviting them to commit to the implementation of the accord by joining the political process and renouncing violence. He added that one should not come to Bangui to engage in dialogue while continuing violence in other parts of the country. The President welcomed the next step of consolidating the different dialogue initiatives into a road map, which would incorporate the key elements of the Sant'Egidio accord.

I welcomed the peace accord facilitated by the Community of Sant'Egidio as an important step and an opportunity to end violence and sustain an inclusive peace process, while highlighting the need to accelerate the harmonization of a single road map for mediation, as agreed at the Brussels coordination meeting on 21 June 2017. During my discussions with members of parliament, I was informed that an

initiative from the parliament had been submitted to the President for consideration. The proliferation of initiatives has a negative impact on the political process; it is important to agree on a single road map. In this context, I welcome the agreement signed in Libreville launching the African Initiative[1] as the unique point of reference for promoting peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

I was informed that some armed groups had begun establishing themselves as political organizations. I consider that a positive step in the peace process.

President Touadera and other interlocutors expressed their grave concern over recent developments related to violence and clashes with armed groups. In my discussions, I reiterated the same concern regarding the threat to stability that this new wave of insecurity and violence represented. This violence, which erupted in May, includes clashes between armed groups (in particular, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique) and violence perpetrated by anti-balaka groups operating in the south-east, as well as attacks against civilians on account of their ethnicity or religion and against the peacekeepers deployed to protect them.

I expressed regret that violence had continued even after the peace accord brokered by the Community of Sant'Egidio had been signed. I reiterated the concerns of the Peacebuilding Commission about the violence, which continued to target the civilian population. I also warned against the dangers of targeting communities on the basis of their ethnic group or religion. In this regard, I agree with my interlocutors in the Central African Republic, particularly the authorities and civil society organizations, that the fight against impunity, as one of the principles agreed in the peacebuilding agenda and reflected in the recommendations of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, remains a priority. I reiterated the support of the Peacebuilding Commission for the reforms and restoration efforts related to the judiciary in the Central African Republic, including the work of the Special Criminal Court.

On Friday, 14 July, I visited Bangassou, east of Bangui (on the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo), which has been affected by the latest incidents of community violence. The broad narrative around these incidents includes clashes between ex-Séléka groups, generally perceived as being foreign fighters of Muslim background, and anti-balaka elements, usually perceived as being Christians. In addition, anti-balaka elements have targeted their Muslim neighbours, accusing them of collusion with the ex-Séléka fighters. In the neighbourhood of Bangassou that I visited, Tokoyo, about 2,000 Muslims have been displaced from their houses and properties. Their houses, as well as the central mosque, have been destroyed or vandalized, and they are being "sheltered" by the Catholic Church in a poorly protected location. I was told that one of the motivations behind those fights was economic; the region is rich in natural resources such as uranium, diamond and gold. The message from the local authorities and the representative of the Catholic Church with whom I met was that MINUSCA peacekeepers with Muslim backgrounds (mainly Moroccans) were biased in favour of the Muslim communities and should be removed from Bangassou. This kind of message has taken on a dangerous twist, as I was told that it was constantly reiterated by national stakeholders in their discussions with United Nations officials.

[1] During the week after my visit, the Government of the Central African Republic, together with regional actors (Angola, Chad, Congo, Gabon, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region) met in Libreville on 17 July and agreed on a joint road map for peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

In response, I called upon the Archbishop of Bangassou to keep faith in the international community and the United Nations and that, as a man of faith, he should promote coexistence and peace.

I was told that the violence in Bangassou had come as a surprise. A closer examination points to two possible additional dynamics identified by partners as being among the causes of the violence in Bangassou and in the surrounding region. One is that the recent withdrawal of United States Special Forces and the Ugandan troops that were deployed to fight the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has left a vacuum in places such as Zemio. The other is that the lack of progress in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process, particularly after the liberation of Bambari, has left many armed combatants out there; it is possible that some of them have moved from Bambari to Bangassou.

I further warned about the recent attacks that had resulted in the loss of life among United Nations peacekeepers, as well as about the sentiments and rhetoric against MINUSCA and its troops.[2] I echoed the message that the perpetrators of such acts would be prosecuted.

In our meeting with the Prime Minister, he expressed his regrets about what he considered as unfair targeting and blaming of MINUSCA for security incidents. While I welcome this statement, I encouraged him and other high-level representatives to denounce the attacks against MINUSCA soldiers and to publicly condemn attacks against any segment of the Central African population.

I insisted on this aspect, as the silence from the authorities could be interpreted as a sign of support for the actors manipulating the situation. It should also help to avoid any kind of misunderstanding between MINUSCA and some national authorities.

With the parliament, I insisted on the positive role that members of parliament could play through pacifying messages when they interacted with their constituencies. Indeed, the population pays attention to the reactions of the elite, leaders and representatives when situations of violence occur. Their silence or messages have an impact on the behaviour of the population. In this regard, I discussed with some national stakeholders the dangers of rumours and miscommunication, mainly with respect to the issues of MINUSCA troop movements or rotations, the arms embargo, the prospect of partitioning the country and impunity for perpetrators of violence and crimes. I encouraged them to speak to their constituencies and to express regret in the media about the different incidents occurring in the country.

The Central African Republic has a vibrant civil society, with relatively well-organized structures. The desire of civil society to participate to the recovery of the country is clear. During my discussions with representatives of human rights, youth and women's organizations, I felt the frustration, and sometimes anger, towards MINUSCA, the Government and regional and international partners.

Representatives of these national stakeholders expressed their frustration in relation to a number of recurrent issues, such as the arms embargo, the departure of the Congolese contingent and the dire socioeconomic situation. They also expressed regret that they had not been involved in the process that had resulted in the recently

[2] In addition to attacks that resulted in the loss of life among peacekeepers, anti-MINUSCA sentiments reflected in some recent acts include marches and protests against the withdrawal of the Congolese contingent (10-11 July), attacks against the MINUSCA force (attacks on 6 July against Portuguese peacekeepers and on 8 July against the Moroccan battalion), demonstrations by internally displaced persons requesting the departure of the Moroccan contingent, and roadblocks on the Zemio-Rafai axis (11 July).

signed agreement under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio, which they perceived as contrary to the spirit of the Bangui Forum, in particular with regard to impunity.

Socioeconomic and humanitarian situation

Growth in gross domestic product in 2017 has averaged 4.5 per cent, according to national authorities and financial institutions. The Prime Minister told me that the initial forecast had been in the double digits and that this figure had been revised downward following a slowdown which had mainly been the result of the eruption of violence.[3]

The deterioration of the security situation in 2017 has caused a worsening of the humanitarian situation, with 2.4 million Central Africans, or about 50 per cent of the population of the country, in need of humanitarian assistance. More than half a million people are internally displaced within the country, and about half a million are refugees in neighbouring countries: Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and South Sudan.

I was encouraged by the statement of the Prime Minister in which he indicated that the Government had been able to pay its civil servants with its own resources. In my meeting with him, the Prime Minister noted that recovery and peacebuilding in the Central African Republic would depend on the investments made in the economic sector.

Donors are generally positive regarding their contributions and commitments to the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery. I told my national interlocutors that the resumption of cooperation with the International Monetary Fund was a very encouraging signal. I encouraged them to undertake the associated reforms and to continue to improve the security of the country as a way to incentivize other partners and to create an environment that was conducive to further investment in the Central African Republic.

Donors have questions about the capacity of national counterparts to drive implementation and to coordinate partners and programmes. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and I urged the Government and donors to recognize that a robust commitment from both sides was critical for the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery to take off and to occupy the headlines in place of daily violent incidents. The challenges related to national capacity in the Central African Republic are more acute than in many post-conflict countries and should receive particular attention from the Peacebuilding Commission and international partners.

I welcomed the holding of the seventh meeting of the technical and financial partners of the Central African Republic, held for the first time in Bangui on 20 June 2017. This first large gathering of donors to the Central African Republic since the donors' conference of November 2016 offered the Government an opportunity to provide an update on the implementation of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery and the humanitarian situation, as well as on new ways of working.

[3] According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff team review mission of June 2017, "deterioration in the security environment disrupted trade, agriculture and mining in the last quarter of 2016, pushing growth down to 4.5 per cent". On 17 July 2017, a press release from IMF indicated that the Executive Board of IMF had completed the second review under the Extended Credit Facility arrangement for the Central African Republic, and had approved a $16.3 million disbursement and an augmentation of $15.5 million.

National plan for peacebuilding and recovery

The implementation of the peacebuilding and recovery agenda has suffered some setbacks, mainly in terms of insecurity and coordination. Funding has been mentioned as an ongoing challenge, although donors have reiterated their commitment to the pledges made in Brussels.

I was granted an update on security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, and the rule of law, which are three very important processes under pillar I of the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery.

With regard to security sector reform, I was told that the United Nations (MINUSCA) and multilateral and bilateral partners were working against the clock to help the Central African Republic create its own security forces, which would fulfil the function of protecting the population and institutions, a function that was currently fulfilled by MINUSCA. It was a painful reality to hear senior Government officials telling me: "We don't have an army; MINUSCA is our army". While this statement reflects a positive appreciation of the excellent work done by MINUSCA troops, it also shows the risks of a slow security sector reform process. The indicative figures I was provided with in terms of army and police to be formed and trained do not cover the security needs of the country. The European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic plans to train between four and six battalions in a four-year period. It has already trained one battalion (600 troops) and is working with MINUSCA on its deployment. The training of the second battalion has already started.

I was informed that MINUSCA planned to help train about 3,000 people for the police and gendarmerie. The United Nations is assisting the country with the normative and soft aspects of security sector reform (vetting, training and human rights due diligence policy), while the Government pursues bilateral cooperation to fulfil the other aspects of security sector reform. The plans for equipment and infrastructure are not clear. While much can be done through bilateral cooperation, it is important to ensure that security forces have the infrastructure needed for them to take over the job of protecting and securing the country.

I was told that the reform and rapid deployment of the army and other national security forces was key to addressing the ongoing insecurity in the country. Without a proper security force, there will be no security at the multiple borders the Central African Republic shares with countries that are experiencing instability or conflict (Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda (because of the LRA)). The absence of national security forces also results in chronic insecurity linked to the competition and anarchy around mining activity and weak to non-existent control of the movement of cattle herds. In addition, the void created by the lack of security forces and the absence of State authority leaves room for all kinds of armed groups and criminals, who take the local population hostage and illegally exploit the natural resources of the country.

The national plan for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration has been developed. According to the update with which I was provided, the plan will support those individuals who qualify (about 5,000-6,000 combatants). The bulk of the combatants (about 50,000-60,000 individuals) will not qualify for the plan, however. These individuals will be supported through the community violence reduction programme, for which the Peacebuilding Fund provides support. The question of treatment of combatants coming from neighbouring countries is yet to be addressed, and I was surprised to learn that there was no funding for specific programmes for women and children.

The Sant'Egidio accord has had an impact on the initial plans. Challenges will include incorporating into the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process the families of combatants, as well as the resources needed in excess of the initial budget. Other challenges include the absence of a more formal accord with the armed groups and the integration of armed groups in the security forces. The community violence reduction programme is more complicated and requires more resources than disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation itself. Partners who support disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, such as the World Bank, have asked that these two aspects — disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, and community violence reduction — be integrated into one national programme.

Support from the Peacebuilding Fund for the first community violence reduction programme was aimed at 7,000 individuals, through cash for work and local microeconomic activity. MINUSCA added $1 million to the programme and Canada has contributed $3 million. The community violence reduction programme in Bambari should target 2,000-3,000 individuals in three communities. ($3 million is needed; the Peacebuilding Fund expected to contribute.) I was told that it was crucial for the United Nations to remain present in the region around Bambari and to activate those programmes; otherwise, armed groups might come back to the area and again cause trouble.

For the rule of law, it was explained to me that the strong focus on the Special Criminal Court could have a negative impact on support for the ordinary justice system. The lack of justice mechanisms outside of Bangui is mainly the result of insufficient security, difficulty in paying salaries and a lack of equipment. The penitentiary system also lacks basic resources and personnel, which results in there being only eight operational prisons out of the 14 that exist in the country. Even the central prison of Bangui is not fully functional. A programme for its renovation has been submitted to partners, but there are still gaps in its budget.

Regional engagement and support

Our discussions highlighted the need to accelerate the harmonization of mediation efforts with members of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, as agreed at the recent Brussels meeting. The President informed me that a meeting of the main stakeholders would take place soon to develop and discuss a joint road map to continue the peace process, which would integrate the outcome of the Sant'Egidio accord, in collaboration with the Initiative.[4] Overall, the United Nations supports the important role of the region, including regional and subregional organizations, and neighbouring countries with regard to the peace and stability of the Central African Republic. MINUSCA supports mediation efforts, including through a project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund.

My interlocutors in Bangui made an appeal for the region to play a stronger role, including by supporting the recommendations of the Bangui Forum as they pertained to issues such as impunity and amnesty, engaging in the resolution of issues such as the movement of combatants, transhumance (cross-border seasonal movement of people and herds), the trafficking of weapons and illegal commerce in natural resources.

[4] That meeting was held in Libreville on 17 July 2017 (see footnote 1).

Concluding remarks

On the side of the United Nations and key multilateral and bilateral actors, there is a sense of urgency and commitment to the peacebuilding and recovery agenda. The Government needs more support in order to meet this commitment with the capacity required. It is important for the United Nations and key partners to help build this capacity, and for the country's leadership to mobilize national counterparts and coordinate programmes and assistance in this regard. I was encouraged by the meeting I had with President Touadera. He indicated that the Government was working on its internal capacity to mobilize and implement the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery. He noted that the permanent secretariat for the national plan was being set up. He welcomed the funding being provided by some partners and invited me to continue my advocacy in order to mobilize the resources required by the programmes and projects related to the national plan.

I suggested to the President that he should send his representatives outside of Bangui more regularly, to at least give the impression of the extension of State authority. The population needs to start experiencing a peace dividend or it will be an easy target for the armed groups.

The success of the Brussels Conference goes beyond the financial aspects. It is also a strong political message of support for the President of the Central African Republic and his engagement in the political process. Any setback to or failure of that process could put into question this support.

From a security perspective, there is a sense that the country could relapse into conflict if the spiralling violence is not stopped and a peace dividend not delivered promptly. There is a widely shared view that MINUSCA peacekeeping capacity should be augmented, a view that I strongly support, given the vast territory it is covering, the resurgence of violence and the absence of national security forces. The architecture of the force should also be revised to focus on the regions that are rich in natural resources, to prevent armed groups from controlling them, which fuels instability and conflict.

I wish to advocate for such a reinforcement of the capacity of MINUSCA, in particular its troops. I note, however, that, even if the issue of resources is resolved in New York, the current trend in the Central African Republic of segregating contingents on the basis of nationality and religion will need to be firmly addressed. The United Nations cannot stay silent in the face of accusations of the complicity of blue helmets. In the absence of any action, the United Nations needs to clearly denounce such narratives and communicate that the troops deployed under the United Nations flag, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, are there to protect the population of the country.

The ethnic and religious nature of the violence, which was instrumentalized by some parties during the early stages of the conflict, is now becoming clearer. The fact that this kind of violence is now affecting Bangassou is an indication of the dangers of the conflict. Indeed, after the eruption of violence in the country in 2013, and even before, the region of Bangassou had always been seen as a safe heaven, a symbol of tolerance and inter-ethnic cohabitation, until May 2017. The international community needs to urgently address this situation, which, given the serious concerns regarding signs of ethnic cleansing, could have serious consequences for the future of the country and the engagement of the United Nations.

I was informed of the creation of a new armed group, called "les Moujahidine", as a consequence of the recent attacks against the Muslim population of Bangassou. There is a serious possibility that this group receives support from

other extremist groups, particularly Boko Haram but also others that are active in the Sahel. It is crucial to avoid attacks against Muslims being used as a pretext by these groups, which would create a risk of the whole region sliding into chaos.

All interlocutors mentioned security incidents and the resumption of community-related violence as the main challenge of 2017. Many noted that other processes were linked: disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation; security sector reform; and political dialogue.

Given the current situation in the country, I would like to recommend a visit of the Security Council to the Central African Republic, with the following suggested objectives:

- To send a strong signal about the significant concern of the Council regarding the evolution of the situation in the country
- To send a message of support for the President to pursue the ongoing political process, as well as for the commitment of the country to implementing the national plan for peacebuilding and recovery, in particular the processes for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and security sector reform, as well as the strengthening of the rule of law and national reconciliation
- To convey the firm stance of the Council regarding armed groups and to express that the Council will not accept the attempts of such groups to lead the country towards an interreligious conflict and take hostage the entire political process
- To get a better sense of the difficulties that MINUSCA is facing, and of the urgent need to address the strengthening of the armed groups, warlords and self-defence groups.

The most recent visit of the Security Council to the country was in March 2015.

The situation in the Central African Republic is an opportunity for the United Nations system to achieve a comprehensive approach that combines peacekeeping, peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts. For instance, one United Nations senior official asked the Peacebuilding Commission to advocate for additional troops to help deliver humanitarian assistance. Without them, the population will be left with no other option than being at the mercy of armed groups, who take advantage of the absence of authority to provide a few services and gain the sympathy and support of the local population.

The plan for Bambari is also an illustration of this approach. President Touadera welcomed the mobilization of partners for the Bambari programme. He suggested that the next step after Bambari would be Kaga Bandoro, and underscored the visibility of a programme in that location as part of the visibility of the Government.

I wish to note the deficit of communication, which could have a negative impact on the trust that is needed between the Government and MINUSCA, as well as among key national, regional and international stakeholders. The hidden agendas of some national actors could jeopardize the impact of international assistance. Therefore, it is important to strengthen support for the national authorities, which will strengthen the legitimacy of the Government.

Similarly, I wish to underscore that unity of resolve among international, regional and national actors is critical to the success of the peace process, and call

for more unified messaging, commitment and coordination around the political process and mediation efforts.

I wish to encourage the subregion to continue to support the recovery of the Central African Republic, and to look at ways to address critical issues such as illicit arms trafficking and seasonal migration. I welcome the joint road map agreed in Libreville on 17 July, which is a very good step in the right direction.

United Nations S/2017/715

Security Council

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23 August 2017

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Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 2343 (2017), is my third report on the progress made by Guinea-Bissau with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in the country. It provides an update on relevant developments since my previous report, of 16 August 2016 (S/2016/720), and includes recommendations on the continuation of the sanctions regime, pursuant to Council resolution 2343 (2017) and in line with paragraph 12 of resolution 2048 (2012).

2. In fulfilment of the above request from the Security Council, the Department of Political Affairs undertook an assessment, in cooperation with the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). During the same period, the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) concerning Guinea-Bissau visited Bissau from 13 to 15 June 2017. The Secretary of the Committee participated in the Chair's meetings with key stakeholders.

II. Key findings

3. Since my previous report, the political impasse in Guinea-Bissau has remained unresolved and continues to limit progress with regard to the consolidation of constitutional order. Despite the deployment of considerable mediation and facilitation efforts by international partners, in particular the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations, national stakeholders have so far failed to agree on a consensual way forward. The impasse continues to discourage international donors from committing financial resources to the country. While constitutional order is not directly threatened so far, the lack of progress in implementing the Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Roadmap for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea Bissau and the chronic institutional crisis continue to give rise to serious concern.

4. The recommendations on the continuation of United Nations sanctions contained in my previous report remain valid and relevant in the light of the unresolved political situation in Guinea-Bissau. The recommendations include the

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maintenance of the present sanctions regime to signal to the entire population that measures are applicable to all spoilers, regardless of their political or institutional affiliation, and that the Council adjusts the measures and designations as needed; the establishment of a panel of experts to support the Committee's work; the establishment of clear benchmarks for lifting sanctions; and a review of the situation with respect to the designated individuals to determine if they continue to meet the listing criteria.

5. There is still broad consensus that sanctions have played a positive role and acted as a deterrent to the direct involvement of the security and defence forces in political affairs. However, some local interlocutors support the idea that the sanctions currently imposed on individuals should be reviewed on account of their commendable behaviour since 2012, and that those responsible for the current political impasse should instead be designated for targeted measures.

6. The military continues to respect the constitutional order and maintains a politically neutral role. However, the risk of an intervention by the military may increase, in particular if the political deadlock persists, reforms of relevant sectors are not implemented, the civilians' protests become violent, the security situation deteriorates, and/or the budgetary situation prevents the payment of salaries to soldiers and officials.

III. Sanctions in Guinea-Bissau

7. There have been no changes to the sanctions regime established by the Security Council pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) since my previous report. The travel ban measure remains in place and the Committee's sanctions list contains the names of 11 individuals, all members of the "Military Command" responsible for the coup d'état of 12 April 2012. Five were designated by the Security Council on 18 May 2012 (Ibraima Camará, António Injai, Estêvão Na Mena, Daba Naualna and Mamadu Ture) and six were subsequently designated by the Committee on 18 July 2012 (Sanha Clussé, Cranha Danfa, Idrissa Djaló, Tchipa Na Bidon, Tcham Na Man and Júlio Nhate).

8. During the past 12 months, the 11 sanctioned individuals remained part of the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau and continued to perform the same functions. The authorities of Guinea-Bissau confirmed officially that the Chief of General Staff of the Navy, Rear Admiral Sanha Clussé, died on 24 April 2016. It should be noted that his name remains on the sanctions list.

9. Since August 2016, two designated individuals have travelled outside Guinea-Bissau,[1] but in both cases they were repatriated to Guinea-Bissau. This is a positive sign that Member States are vigilant in the enforcement of United Nations sanctions. The assessment also revealed that some misunderstanding remains with regard to the scope of the travel ban restriction. It is important to note that travel, justified on the grounds of humanitarian need, may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Committee (see resolution 2048 (2012), para. 5). Since my previous report, the Committee has not received any requests for any travel ban exemptions.

10. However, as noted in my previous reports, the impact of sanctions in Guinea-Bissau has surpassed the travel ban restrictions imposed by resolution 2048 (2012). All interlocutors agreed that sanctions had had a positive effect in deterring the direct involvement of the armed forces in the political situation. At the same time, there were numerous calls for the possible application of sanctions to any

[1] General Ibraima Camará (GBi.001) and General Mamadu Ture (GBi.011), on 10 February 2017 and 3 April 2017, respectively, travelled from Bissau to the Léopold Sédar Senghor international airport in Dakar but they were sent back by the Senegalese authorities.

individuals responsible for fomenting political instability within the country, including civilians, in particular politicians.

IV. Progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau

11. The country is still facing considerable political and institutional uncertainty. The impasse is illustrated by the failure of the National Assembly to hold plenary sessions since January 2016 and by the failure of four consecutive Governments to adopt their programme of work and the national budget. Polarization among the major political stakeholders has further contributed to heightened political and social tensions and repeatedly led to speculations about an increased likelihood of political interference by the military.

12. On 10 September 2016, a high-level delegation from ECOWAS, led by the President of Guinea, Alpha Condé, in his capacity as ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, visited Bissau. The delegation held consultations with national political stakeholders, including the President, José Mário Vaz, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Cipriano Cassamá, the Prime Minister, Baciro Djá, representatives of the five parties with parliamentary seats, and the group of 15 parliamentarians (the "Group of 15") who had been expelled from the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC). The national stakeholders agreed to a six-point road map to end the political crisis, which would include the holding of an inclusive national round-table dialogue, the formation of an inclusive government to implement key reforms before the legislative elections in 2018, the establishment of an ECOWAS monitoring and follow-up mechanism, the implementation of reforms in the defence and security sectors, and the progressive demobilization of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) within six months of the formation of a national contingent to take over its mandate of protecting State institutions.

13. From 10 to 14 October, the ECOWAS Mediator convened consultations with national stakeholders in Conakry, which focused on the implementation of the first two elements of the road map: the appointment of a consensual Prime Minister and an inclusive government and the holding of an inclusive national dialogue on critical constitutional reforms. On 14 October, the political stakeholders signed the Conakry Agreement, which provided for the appointment of a consensual Prime Minister who would have the confidence of the President; the formation of an inclusive government to implement a programme of reforms stemming from a national round-table dialogue, to be held within 30 days of the appointment of the Prime Minister; the development and adoption of a stability pact, which would include provisions on constitutional reform aimed at establishing stable relations between the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary, electoral reforms for the organization of legislative and local elections in 2018, a new political party law including provisions on public funding of political parties, defence, security and justice sector reform and the launch of the implementation of a development programme; and the unconditional reintegration of the Group of 15 expelled from PAIGC into the party, in accordance with the party's rules. The Agreement also included the provision of support by ECOWAS, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the United Nations and the European Union for the implementation of the stability pact and the establishment of an ECOWAS monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure the stability of the entire process.

14. Since then, however, differences among political stakeholders with regard to the appointment of the Prime Minister have persisted. On 15 November, the President dismissed the Government of the Prime Minister, Mr. Djá, on the basis

that it had been unable to obtain the approval of the National Assembly for its programme of work and the national budget. On 18 November, he appointed Umaro Sissoco Embaló as Prime Minister. Mr. Embaló, who was one of three candidates put forward by the President for the parliamentary political parties to choose from during the Conakry talks in mid-October 2016, was not the candidate selected by the ruling PAIGC, a key precondition for resolving the impasse. The reactions of national stakeholders to the appointment were in accordance with the positions that they had taken following the signing of the Conakry Agreement. PAIGC contended that the President had repudiated the Agreement through the appointment, while the Party for Social Renewal (PRS) announced that it agreed with the appointment. On 12 December, the President appointed, by decree, the members of the Government. Of the five parties represented in the National Assembly, PRS alone joined the new Government.

15. In view of the failure of the President to appoint a consensual Prime Minister, in a final communiqué issued following its fiftieth ordinary session on 17 December, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government urged the President to comply with the provisions of the Agreement and called upon all parties to strictly respect and comply with the tenets of the Agreement. The Authority also directed the ECOWAS Commission to withdraw ECOMIB by the end of its current mandate on 30 June 2017, beginning in April 2017.

16. On 22 February, the Permanent Commission of the National Assembly once more rejected, by a majority vote of its PAIGC members, the scheduling of an ordinary session on the new Government's programme of work. In its record of proceedings issued immediately after the meeting, the Permanent Commission rejected the scheduling of the debate on the programme on the grounds that it had been submitted by a Government that was not in compliance with the Conakry Agreement.

17. The political tension in the capital trickled down to the regions, with several stand-offs between supporters of the Group of 15 and the mainstream PAIGC. On 5 March, the leader of PAIGC and a former Prime Minister, Domingos Simões Pereira, returned to Bissau, after spending more than one month outside the country, amid heavy police presence. Thousands of supporters, as well as members of the Forum of Democratic Parties for Political Dialogue, rallied at the airport to welcome him, following persistent allegations that he could be arrested upon his arrival. The leader of PAIGC departed safely from the airport, escorted by elements of ECOMIB.

18. The number of demonstrations and counterdemonstrations mobilized by political stakeholders also increased. On 9 March, a movement called "The Citizen" reportedly gathered from 2,000 to 3,000 people in front of the National Assembly, including some members of Government, PRS and the Group of 15. The demonstrators called for the resumption of the National Assembly's activities and shouted slogans in support of the President and the Government. During a meeting with UNIOGBIS, also on 9 March, the Speaker of the National Assembly thanked UNIOGBIS and ECOMIB for their assistance which, according to him, had prevented the demonstrators from ransacking the National Assembly premises and his residence. On 11 March, the Movement of Conscious and Nonconformist Citizens reportedly gathered from 2,500 to 3,000 participants, who marched from the national airport to the city centre, shouting slogans calling for the resignation of the President. Although PAIGC did not express public support for the march, many supporters and parliamentarians from the party participated. On 27 May, a demonstration organized by the Movement of Conscious and Nonconformist Citizens and other civil society organizations resulted in confrontations between law

enforcement personnel and demonstrators, and 18 people, including demonstrators and law enforcement personnel, were hospitalized.

19. On 23 April, following consultations in Conakry with the President of Guinea in his capacity as ECOWAS Mediator, an ECOWAS ministerial assessment and follow-up mission to the Conakry Agreement arrived in Bissau, with logistics support from UNIOGBIS, for talks with national and international stakeholders. The parties once more reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the Conakry Agreement, while national political and civil society stakeholders deplored the announced withdrawal of ECOMIB, fearing it could have a detrimental impact on security and stability in the country. In the absence of implementation of any aspects of the Agreement, the ECOWAS ministerial mission issued a final communiqué, prior to departing from Bissau on 24 April, recommending the imposition of relevant sanctions by all ECOWAS member States and the international community on individuals, groups of individuals and entities that obstruct the smooth implementation of the Conakry Agreement, together with their close collaborators, in the event of non-compliance with or a lack of concrete steps towards implementing the Agreement within 30 days.

20. On 30 May, a newly established group of women's organizations, the Women's Mediation Committee, issued a press release and appealed to political parties to engage in constructive dialogue for conflict resolution and requested that the international community remain vigilant and activate relevant mechanisms to avoid unintended consequences. The Women's Mediation Committee met with key political leaders, including the President, the Speaker, the leaders of PAIGC and PRS and the Group of 15.

21. Following its fifty-first ordinary session held on 4 June in Monrovia the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government took note of the assessment made by the ministerial mission following its visit to Bissau in April and of the readiness of all stakeholders to hold direct talks towards the implementation of the Conakry Agreement. The Heads of State and Government urged all stakeholders to strictly respect and comply with the tenets of the Agreement. They also extended the mandate of ECOMIB for three months to allow for the full implementation of the Agreement by the political stakeholders and affirmed their determination to institute, if needed, targeted sanctions against all those who obstruct the smooth implementation of the Agreement.

22. From 22 to 24 June, PAIGC held its first-ever national convention in Bissau, gathering some 600 delegates from all over the country. In his opening remarks, the leader of PAIGC stated that the President was putting the country at risk by keeping an unconstitutional Government. The convention ended with the adoption of several recommendations, including on the need for constitutional reform to clarify the balance of power among the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary, while keeping the semi-presidential system; the need to reform the legislation on elections and political parties; the need to carry out internal reforms to increase the representation of women and young people within the party; and the need to minimize the recurrence of internal conflicts. The convention also recommended that the president of PAIGC should have a say in the selection of the party's candidates for the presidential and legislative elections and reiterated the call from the Forum of Democratic Parties for Political Dialogue for the President to appoint Augusto Olivais as the consensual Prime Minister within the framework of the Conakry Agreement. The convention took place amid tension involving a faction of the Group of 15, which accused the leadership of PAIGC of excluding all supporters of the Group of 15. The police prevented some young sympathizers of the Group of 15 from disrupting the gathering on the first day of the convention. The former

Prime Minister, Mr. Djá, who held the position of third Vice-President of PAIGC prior to the political crisis, participated in the event.

23. On 26 June, the President met with religious leaders on the occasion of the end of Ramadan. In his statement, he called for unity among the people of Guinea-Bissau and stressed that national stakeholders should do their best to overcome their country's challenges within the next 90 days. He specifically called upon PAIGC, PRS and the Group of 15 to come to an agreement and facilitate the adoption of the Government's programme of work and the national budget, adding that, should national actors fail to reach an agreement, he would return the power to the people of Guinea-Bissau by convening early elections. The next day, the leader of PAIGC reiterated the need to respect and begin the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, deploring the fact that the President had taken too long to consider the possibility of calling early elections as a way out of the impasse. The leader of the United People's Assembly-Democratic Party of Guinea-Bissau, Nuno Nabiam, who was the runner-up in the 2014 presidential election, called for early legislative and presidential elections. Furthermore, he suggested the formation of a government of national unity to prepare for the polls and conduct a prior review of the Constitution and the electoral law.

24. On 30 June, the Minister of Social Communication of Guinea-Bissau announced the suspension of the activities of three Portuguese media outlets in Guinea-Bissau, namely Radio Televisão de Portugal, Radio Difusão de Portugal and Lusa Agency, arguing that the expiration of the cooperation agreement between Lisbon and Bissau had expired. The Lusa Agency was later removed from the list of suspended media outlets. The decision was widely condemned both nationally and internationally, including by the Government of Portugal and the European Union, prompting the Minister to clarify on 1 July that the issue was technical rather than political.

25. On 7 July, the President met separately with the Speaker of the National Assembly and the President of the Supreme Court. In addition, on 10 July, he held bilateral meetings with the leaders of PAIGC, PRS and the Group of 15. He was joined in all these meetings by the coordinator of the Women's Mediation Committee, Francisca Vaz. The meetings reportedly addressed the scenario of a dissolution of the National Assembly, the mandate of the electoral commission, the appointment of a consensual Prime Minister, prospects for the approval of the government programme of a Prime Minister supported by PAIGC, the reintegration of the Group of 15 into PAIGC and the possible composition of a broad-based government.

26. In spite of the ongoing political impasse and recurring protest movements, economic growth is expected to continue in 2017. However, as stated in my two previous reports (S/2015/619 and S/2016/720), the root causes of instability in Guinea-Bissau remain unaddressed and the current political paralysis has reversed the progress made after the successful general elections in 2014. As legislative and presidential elections, currently scheduled for 2018 and 2019, respectively, approach, the implementation of key reforms becomes even more urgent.

V. Recommendations on the continuation of United Nations sanctions

27. The prolonged political paralysis within Guinea-Bissau continues to highlight the fragility of State institutions and the lack of success in the political dialogue. To date, the security situation remains stable and tensions have not turned violent, the military does not interfere in political disputes, human rights seem to be respected

overall and the constitutional order is not acutely threatened. However, I believe it is important to underscore that the current situation is not sustainable, which highlights the urgency of finding a resolution to the political impasse.

28. The recommendations on the continuation of United Nations sanctions contained in my previous report (S/2016/720) remain valid and relevant to the political situation in Guinea-Bissau. The Security Council may wish to maintain the current designation criteria and send a clear message to all citizens of Guinea-Bissau that the sanctions regime is applicable to all spoilers, regardless of their political or institutional affiliation, and that the Council will give consideration to further enhancing sanctions measures and designations as and when required. The Council could also consider the establishment of a panel of experts in order to deepen the information base for the Committee to promote greater awareness of the sanctions regime inside the country and to identify those who meet the designation criteria for targeted measures.

29. The current reported role played by the military, and by the listed individuals in particular, highlights the importance for the Security Council and its Committee to review the sanctions list. I recommend that the Committee update the sanctions list to take into account the information received concerning the death of Sanha Clussé.

30. The visit of the Chair of the Committee to Bissau was a strong signal of the Council's commitment to the people of Guinea-Bissau. It was also seen as a sign of the Council's resolve to consider targeted sanctions in combination with other Charter-based instruments to peacefully resolve the political impasse in the country. Continued engagement by the Committee with local, regional and international actors, as well as United Nations system partners, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is also recommended.